

## Excusing my French/Latin/German.

### Modelling geographical and semantic structure in the use of loanwords in dialectal varieties of Dutch

Many words in the dialects of Dutch have their origin in a different language. For example, the French noun *caban* is often used to refer to a WARM COAT; the Latin word *crucifix* for a CRUCIFIX (*kruisbeeld* in Dutch) and the German word *frech* for INSOLENT. In this paper we use inferential statistical techniques to investigate whether we can find semantic and geographical differences in the frequency of use of loanwords in dialects. We expect that the language that is used the most differs per semantic field and that the number of borrowings from a particular source language varies across the dialect areas under investigation.

Using Generalized Additive Modelling, we analyze the geographical and semantic structure of loanword usage in four semantic fields of the digitized databases of the dictionaries of the Brabantic and Limburgish dialects (WBD and WLD), viz. clothing and personal hygiene; personality and feelings; society, school and education; church and religion. On the one hand, we find that the geographical distribution of loanwords differs per source language. French is used more in Flanders, while Latin occurs throughout the area of the Brabantic and Limburgish dialects. German is predominantly used close to the border between Limburg and Germany. On the other hand, we show that the French and Latin loanwords are significantly more frequent in the fields of clothing and personal hygiene, and church and religion, respectively. Overall, the interaction between the geographical and semantic structure in the use of the loanwords confirms that borrowed lexemes reflect the structure of society throughout history to a large extent (e.g. Van der Sijs 2005: 23). We find both traces of language contact with more prestigious varieties (viz. French and Latin) and of the influence of geographical proximity (for the German loanwords) in lexical dialect data.

## References

- Van der Sijs, N. (2005). *Groot leenwoordenboek*. Utrecht: Van Dale Lexicografie.
- WBD = Weijnen, A., Van Hout, R. & Van Langendonck, W. 1967-2005. *Woordenboek van de Brabantse dialecten*. Assen/Utrecht: Gopher/Van Gorcum.
- WLD = Weijnen, A., Draye, L. & Van Hout, R. 1983-2008. *Woordenboek van de Limburgse dialecten*. Amsterdam/Groningen/Utrecht: Gopher.